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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE

A PROFESSIONAL READING COURSE ON THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE CHURCH. I

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The past ten years have seen something like a revolution in the work of the Sunday school. The churches have come to see that it is vital to the development of Christianity. A church without a Sunday school is an army without recruiting stations; and recruits badly trained are sadly inefficient. The work of the Religious Education Association, and the reorganization of great denominational boards, have served to inaugurate reforms of the utmost importance. Sunday schools have been graded, admirable new teaching material has been published, directors of religious education have been appointed in churches, departments of religious education in theological seminaries have been developed, and religious psychology has its increasing libraries. The BIBLICAL WORLD has been a pioneer in this field, and the articles of Professor Soares will be of increasing service to the growing number of clergymen who are eager to develop the really educational function of the church.

It is strange that there ever should have arisen an antithesis between education and spiritual power. Perhaps the fault was on both sides. But with education everywhere defined today in spiritual and social terms, there is no reason for anyone to fear that a cold intellectualism will replace religious fervor. Education even in our schools is quite as much concerned with emotional reactions, with volitional activities, with the controls of conduct, as with intellectual apprehension. Education, indeed, is the whole process by which the individual is fitted to become an efficient member of the social organism; and while this includes an ever-widening knowledge, it is supremely a matter of the quality of personality.

There are those who are quite willing to admit the educational aspect of the work of the church, but they would insist that this must be made subsequent to the saving or evangelizing work of the church. They would say that persons must first be born into the family of God and then trained to be effective members of the family. So some ministers teach the saints in the morning and evangelize the sinners in the evening; some Sunday schools teach the pupils for so many Sundays and seek conversions on other Sundays. But there is no real antithesis here. Any adequate conception of religious education includes evangelism, expects earnest decisions, makes provision for classes on personal religion. But the endeavor is made so to understand the

real nature of the various religious experiences that the whole process may be helpful, vigorous, continuous, and therefore educative.

As a matter of fact, all the work of the church is educational, the proper division being that some of it is educational directly and some of it indirectly. The preaching, teaching, reading, singing, assembling of ourselves together, the promotion of sociability, in fact, almost all of the activities within the church walls are directly educational. We are consciously seeking the development of religious personality. On the other hand, the work of the church in ministry to the needy, the poor, the sorrowing, the unfortunate, the wayward, in relating itself to the social and civic movements of reform and advancement, in contributing to the great missionary enterprises at home and abroad, is not undertaken primarily for the education of its own members. And yet these ministries and activities are educational in the highest degree, and we are just beginning to realize how important it is that their educational character should be carefully questioned, e.g., the effect upon Christian beneficences of the raising of money by "catch-penny" devices.

A study of the educational work of the church, therefore, is an attempt to discover how direct educational activities may be most effectively carried on and how all the activities of the church may have a sound educational quality.

The scientific literature upon this subject is not very large. It is unfortunate that the demand for books on religious education has resulted in premature publication by many persons

whose knowledge on the subject was quite meager. There are some fairly good books of a popular nature dealing with practical methods of church work in which the educational idea is prominent. And there is a large output of popular works on Sunday-school methods some of which are accurate and helpful. Up to the present time the scientific study of religious experience has been undertaken rather from the psychological than from the educational point of view, and therefore the most important scientific works are in the field of the psychology of religion. The works of James, Starbuck, Leuba, Davenport, Irving King, Pratt, Coe, Ames, Farnell are in this field and are a proper preparation for our present study. As these books are already treated in a companion reading course in the *American Institute of Sacred Literature*, their general position may here be assumed. We shall consider our subject in the following arrangement:

1. Books dealing with the general problem of the educational work of the church:
Faunce, *The Educational Ideal in the Ministry*.
H. C. King, *Personal and Ideal Elements in Education*.
Coe, *Education in Religion and Morals*.
2. Some books on educational psychology as a broad basis for particular religious application:
Thorndike, *Education*.
Horne, *Psychological Principles of Education*.
H. Thistleton Mark, *The Unfolding of Personality*.
Sisson, *The Essentials of Character*.
James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*.
3. Books especially concerned with educational problems of the church:

Burton and Mathews, *Principles and Ideals in the Sunday School*.

Cope, *Efficiency in the Sunday School*.

Cope, *The Efficient Layman*.

Haslett, *The Pedagogical Bible School*.

4. A group of books dealing with the special problems of youth:

Kirkpatrick, *Fundamentals of Child Study*.

Forbush, *The Boy Problem*.

Hoben, *The Minister and the Boy*.

Milne, *The Church and the Young Man's Game*.

5. A few books of educational vision suggestive of the problems of the future:

Dewey, *School and Society*.

Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education*.

Blow, Hill, Harrison, *The Kindergarten*.

Montessori, *The Montessori Method*.

President Faunce in his Yale lectures, *The Educational Ideal in the Ministry*, upholds the thesis that the minister's entire conception of his work is to be educational. Over against the priest and the orator he places the teacher—not the pedagogue, of course, but the teacher, the man who leads by presenting constraining ideals. This opens up the whole question of the modern view of the world and revelation. Faunce points out how this must be faced, and how it must be pedagogically presented to an "ungraded congregation." Those modernists who have discarded the Bible as old fashioned would do well to ponder carefully the chapter on "Modern Uses of Ancient Scripture." "It is one of the best presentations that has been made of the abiding value of the Bible in religious education, and this just because of the frank acceptance of the modern point of view. Not less serious is the minister's problem in relation to the leadership of his people in right thought and action upon the complicated

ethical questions of our day. With fine discrimination Faunce points out the various dangers to which the ministry is liable and shows how the educational ideal can be followed. As regards the direct educational work of the church, especially the organization and conduct of the Sunday school, it must be dependent upon the minister. He must fortify himself by the study of the best books on psychology and educational method for leadership in this work. And the theological seminaries must prepare men far more thoroughly than they have done to be such educational leaders. It is extraordinary that so many ministers still think of themselves only as preachers and leave to untrained laymen the conduct of the *school* of the church. The strictures of Dr. Faunce upon our Sunday-school system are none too severe and the remedy must be largely with the minister.

It is evident that if the task of the church is to be conceived as educational it ought to appeal in a special manner to our college men and women. Why it has not done so, how it may do so, and the great opportunities that are here open, are admirably treated in the chapter on the "Relation of Church and College." And finally, it is shown how the minister's own education may be furnished by his task. Every profession has its belittling tendencies, and not the least the ministry. How may the minister avoid the temptations of his calling and grow more a man as he becomes more a minister? It is the educational ideal that will save him.

Dr. Faunce's book is not revolutionary. A man may read it superficially and think that there is nothing new in

it. But a thoughtful minister may read it over again every year and find the meaning of his task enhanced as he feels the spiritual summons to be what Jesus himself was, a teacher.

President King's book, *Personal and Ideal Elements in Education*, is a collection of addresses, some of which might not at first seem to have much relation to the church. But a careful reading of these masterly essays will reveal the principles which underlie the educational work of the church. And while the clear psychological and pedagogical statements help us to see the exact nature of our task and estimate it scientifically, the warm religious spirit with which Dr. King always writes will help us to realize the temper and faith in which that task must be carried on.

In an inaugural address (now in printed form) as president of Oberlin, where he might seem to be concerned simply with a college audience, there come out those fundamental ideas which we so greatly need in our church work. Its very title, "The Primacy of the Person," is a challenge for the reconstruction of much of our religious endeavor, and its main contentions are in the field of religious education; these, for example, that the school is to teach the fine art of living, that education is not intellectualism, that the distinction between the sacred and the secular disappears in any genuine education, that appreciation of music and art as well as of great literature is a high educational achievement, that the expression of activity is vital in any educational method, that the objective spirit is far more needed than the introspective, that genuine reverence must guard an-

other's moral initiative, that character is caught rather than taught, that the great ends of education are culture, character, and social efficiency. The minister would do well to see the significance of these ideals for our schools and colleges and then seriously consider how far they are followed in the church.

In "The Fundamental Nature of Religion" Dr. King sets forth the relations between religion and education which make both more significant. He shows that in their ultimate aims, spirit, method, and results, they are one. It sounds little like the pedagogue to say that the highest results of education are convictions and ideals. We had thought they were the result of religion in the soul. But the culture of religion in the soul is an educative process. Schools ought to do it with social life, discipline, curriculum, and personal leadership of teachers, and churches ought to do it in the same way. And when Dr. King quotes Kaftan of Berlin as saying that the greatest problem of life is the problem of the appreciative understanding of the great personalities of history in order to make a plea for the study of Jesus in our colleges, we see how well the church might be equipped to meet this supreme problem.

In the address on "Religious Education as Conditioned by Modern Psychology and Pedagogy" the minister will not get a lot of ready-made methods suitable for the immediate needs of his church. He will get some fundamental principles which will repay careful thought and which he may work out in many applications in his own work.

The address most directly upon our

problem is that dealing with "Christian Training and the Revival as Methods of Converting Men." It is one of the most careful studies that has been made on the subject. The essential qualities of each method with its advantages and dangers are pointed out in clear, psychological analysis. Dr. King would keep both methods, each in its place: not the revival for regeneration and training for sanctification; that is a conventional and unreal distinction; but continuous efforts, never without enthusiasms, and special efforts, always with self-control and respect for personality, helping different individuals according to different temperaments and needs. King makes large use of "the subliminal consciousness" of James. Psychologists are not at all agreed that any great help can be secured from this theory, and it would be wise to use it with caution.

Let it be said finally that Dr. King's buoyant and affirmative faith in a personal God may be a great help to some who have been troubled by the god-symbol, which is all that some psychology of religion affords.

Perhaps Professor Coe's book, *Education in Religion and Morals*, should not be included here, as it is to be supposed that everyone interested in the educational work of the church has read it. Yet it ought to be included, for, although written ten years ago, it remains on the whole, the most satisfactory book upon the subject. Professor Coe was one of the earliest workers in the new religious education and has remained one of the leaders. This book presents very clearly the leading ideas of the modern educational move-

ment and applies them to the problems of moral and religious life. Particularly valuable are the discussions on the unity of the whole educational process, the connection between the principles of modern education and the essential principles of religion, the social character of education and of religion. Coe sounds a needed note of warning when he lays great emphasis upon the significance of leadership. He advocates this in church and family life, points out the importance of the young sharing mature interests as well as the mature understanding youthful interests; and very vitally connects this principle with the religious idea of fellowship with God.

The second part deals with the "religious impulse," which is the least satisfactory discussion in the book. It would be well to consult an article by Professor Coe in the *American Journal of Theology* for April, 1914, on "The Origin and Nature of Children's Faith in God," in which the author presents the interesting suggestion that this has its basis in the parental instinct. He believes that children come to an appreciation of the paternal conception of God by the exercise of what is essentially a parental attitude toward dolls, pets, and persons who elicit sympathy. This discussion and the trenchant criticism in the same article upon the much overworked theory of recapitulation presents Coe's more complete thought on these subjects. The origin of religion in the individual is a difficult problem and must be pursued in the books on the psychology of religion, but at least it is necessary to be careful in speaking of a religious instinct or impulse. Religion is not so primary as that. It is a more

complex experience growing out of social relations and ideals.

Coe's treatment of genetic psychology, while brief, is very helpful, and his sketch of the normal religious development should be an ideal for every minister.

Of course, the discussion of the institutions of religion, particularly of the Sunday school, represents the point of view of 1904. Much progress has been made since then, to which Professor Coe has in no small measure contributed. The graded curriculum has established itself. However, the problem of materials for the various stages of development is more acute than ever. The demand for the unification of the educational forces of the church has been heeded in many quarters, but the situation is still practically what is here so justly criticized. The vital question of religious and moral education in Christian academies and colleges, and in state schools, has been greatly to the fore in the last decade. Perhaps some progress has been made, but the elements

of the problem are still as here stated and merit earnest continued consideration.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is the minister of today willing to accept the educational ideal with all that it involves?
2. How can the minister become the educational leader of his church and still retain the initiative of the laymen?
3. Can the moral aim be kept paramount in all education?
4. In what sense can evangelism be made truly educational?
5. Can there be an education in "spirituality"?
6. Is religion an instinct? If not, how does it arise in human experience?

SOME FURTHER WORKS

Nicholas Murray Butler, *The Meaning of Education*.

Nicholas Murray Butler, *et al*, *Principles of Religious Education*.

Volumes of the Religious Education Association.

George E. Dawson, *The Child and His Religion*.

Felix Adler, *Moral Instruction of Children*.

W. W. Smith, *Religious Education*.

SUGGESTIONS TO LEADERS OF CLASSES USING THE ORIGIN AND TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS¹

It is necessary before taking up the class work of the present month to get a very definite point of view from which to approach it. The members of the class are more or less familiar with the Gospels. They have always been accustomed to think of them from the point of view of the

study of the life of Christ. Their object, therefore, led them to find out all that they could about the life of Christ from any of the gospels; it mattered not what the source of the information was, provided the facts were there. The purpose of the present study is something quite different and has

¹The suggestions relate to the fifth month's work, the student's material for which appears in the *Biblical World* for January and February, and may be obtained in pamphlet reprints for use with classes. Address: THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE, The University of Chicago.